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The *cakes* are now in constant requisition. The novel supersedes all other forms of philosophical instruction, and doctrines destined to regenerate the world are attached (too often hung as sinkers) to the love-adventures of Henry and Julia. Mrs. Smith has encased in "Bertha and Lily" her entire "Gospel of to-day,"—her pet notions as to social reform, the "liberty of prophesying," woman's rights, and man's and woman's respective *missions*. The story is obscure, broken, and heavy, but relieved by some passages of great vigor and eloquence, especially by the Hypatia-like utterances of the heroine, and enriched by several sonnets and other poems of peculiar simplicity and sweetness. With the humane and hopeful tone of the book we heartily sympathize. From many of its doctrines we no less heartily dissent. But we would prefer to meet them in an argumentative form, instead of encountering them in this garb of fiction, in which they are indeed unanswerable, because they make their appeal, not to the reason, but to the æsthetic nature.

- 15.—*Armenia: a Year at Erzeroom, and on the Frontiers of Russia, Turkey, and Persia.* By the HON. ROBERT CURZON. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1854. 24mo. pp. 226.

THE author of this book was one of the Commissioners appointed by the government of Great Britain, at the request of those of Turkey and Persia, to aid in the settlement of their border controversies, and in the suppression of their border hostilities. The climate, roads, and condition of the country prevented his making any very extensive explorations; nor did much fall under his notice at Erzeroom, except penury, misgovernment, discomfort, bigotry, and ignorance. But he has faithfully described all that he saw, and has given us as interesting an account as he could of a country, the very name of which excites curiosity, in part because it is so little known, and in part because its emigrant natives are so well known and so strongly marked in all the commercial cities of Western Asia and Eastern Europe. The else scant narrative is pieced out by a succinct and well-written sketch of the political and ecclesiastical history of Armenia.

- 16.—*Literary Recreations and Miscellanies.* By JOHN G. WHITTIER. Boston: Ticknor & Fields. 1854. 12mo. pp. 431.

MOST of the pieces in this volume were written for newspapers and other periodicals, but merit a more enduring place in the literature of

the day than their original destination could win for them. We are not sure but that we like Whittier's prose better than his poetry. The rhythm of his verse, generally smooth and pure, sometimes betrays a lack of that nice artistical skill, with which no poet, even with genius of the highest order, can afford to dispense, unless at the same time he rids himself of the shackles of rhyme and measure. But the rhythm of his prose pulses upon the reader's inward ear with a singularly perfect euphony, and in gentler or more stirring moods closely adapted to the subject in hand. But, apart from the mere word-drapery, Whittier has, to all appearance, a characteristic hardly conceivable in an editor, — the slave of the hour, — that of always writing with heart and soul. We see no traces of the kind of composition drawn from the exhausted brain by the demand for "more copy," — no "got up" articles. The longest, and in our opinion the best, piece in this volume is "My Summer with Dr. Singletary," — a sketch embodying a principal personage with several side figures, manifestly drawn from life, and from some of the choicest originals of New England village society. We have so recently reviewed the author's previous publications, that we need only add concerning this, that it is fitted not merely to sustain, but to extend and enhance, his literary reputation.

17. — *The Better Land; or, The Believer's Journey and Future Home.*
By AUGUSTUS C. THOMPSON, Pastor of the Eliot Church, Roxbury,
Mass. Boston: Gould & Lincoln. 1854. 16mo. pp. 244.

THE title of this book explains its plan and purpose. Shunning such matters as divide Christians on their way to "the better land," it sets forth the sentiments and hopes which they cherish in common as to the way-marks, the recognitions, the services, the joys of the celestial city. It breathes the spirit of one who loves the way he describes, and gravitates toward the home which supplies his theme. We like the book for two characteristics which mark it so strongly, that they must elicit either emphatic praise or equally emphatic censure. One is its affluence in quotations, which break up at every hand's turn the continuity of the author's own work. This would be a fault in a treatise of a different description, but here the subject is one on which our own sentiments are best corroborated, not by the reasoning of any one uninspired man, but by the various yet consenting testimony of "the long cloud of witnesses." The other point to which we would refer is the free use made of a wide diversity of terrestrial images and illustrations. In this our author has not only followed the leading of Holy Writ, but has con-